

**PUBLIC WORKS & FACILITIES COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2016
TIME: 7:00 P.M.
MUNICIPAL BUILDING
ROOM 208
MIDDLETOWN, CT**

Members Present: Councilman Carl R. Chisem
Councilman Thomas Serra
Councilman Gene Nocera
Councilman Philip Pessina
Councilman Sebastian Giuliano

Staff Present: William Russo, Director of Public Works
Christopher Holden, P.E., Deputy Director of Public Works

Others Present: John Hollerbach, Creative Recreation
Rebecca McLaughlin, 35 Clover Street
Krishna Winston, 655 Bow Lane
Artha Slade, Middletown Resident
Sharon Hunt, 84 Red Clover Circle
Lurette Hanson, 58 Highland Avenue
Jamie Datino, 454 High Street
Christine Solimini-Swift, 1436 Millbrook Road
Emily Swift, 1436 Millbrook Road

Chair Chisem opened the Public Works & Facilities Commission meeting at 7:00 P.M. Chair Chisem requested a motion to approve the minutes dated October 12, 2016. Motion to approve the minutes was seconded and approved unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS:

None.

CORRESPONDENCE:

- a. Letter From Middlesex County Historical Society – Annual Antique Car & Truck Show. Director Russo stated that this letter was from Deborah Shapiro. She wanted to thank the Commission for allowing her to use Palmer Field on October 2, 2016 for the Antique Car & Truck Show. She included how the event was set up beautifully and in a very convenient blacktop location. She looks forward to having another show next year on October 1, 2017. Director Russo stated that the Legion was also pleased with this event since money was coming in for the concession stand and the car show itself.

Deputy Director Holden stated that the Multi-use trail will extend from the soccer fields on Long Hill Road and continue to the intersection of Wadsworth Street and Long Lane. There was discussion regarding the number of trees that need to be taken down to minimize the large street tree impact. The final design fees are in the negotiation process since the length of the trail is still to be determined.

- b. Letter From Hugh H. Hayward, P.E. – Wesleyan Hills/Wesleyan University Multi-Use Trail. Director Russo stated that this letter was from the Mayor to Hugh H. Hayward, Principal Engineer for Connecticut Department of Transportation in regards to the Public Informational Meeting on September 29, 2016. Based on the reviews of the public comments, it has been determined that the project shall proceed final design based on the preliminary design plans.

NEW BUSINESS:

Chair Chisem made a motion to discuss item 5c first under New Business. Motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

- a. Update On Current Parks Bond – Tina Gomes handed out packets of the budget to the Commission. Included in the packet is the Woodrow Wilson and Pat Kidney project. Money has been encumbered to Millone & MacBroom along with more that is set aside for the projected expenditures.

A total of 4.2 million dollars and 4.3 million dollars have been projected for the project at both locations. This will be a total of 8.5 million dollars which will allow for extra money to be transferred since the project was budgeted at 9.6 million dollars. Tina Gomes stated that \$98,000.00 was budget originally since most of the equipment was not added until later on. Since the project is going to cost more, she discussed ways to obtain money and transfer it from other line items. Millone & MacBroom's project at Pat Kidney Field and the Woodrow Wilson Track will allow for extra money to be used towards Butternut Park.

Spear Park was budget at \$55,000.00 and there is \$8,000.00 left which can be transferred out of that line with the Council's permission along with \$2,200.00 in purchase orders that can be closed out.

Pat Kidney's bid will be out for thirty days on February 1, 2017 so that by March 1, 2016 the total figure will be ready to go. Once this figured is set, it will be easier to determine where to transfer the money from and then recommendations can be made.

- b. Route 9 Discussion – Deputy Holden stated that the initial public hearings heard the concern with the blocking of the view of the river and the congestion on Main Street. There was discussion on pushing the traffic up on to Rapallo Avenue and making it a one way street. Part of the design now includes pushing up further north of the off-ramp from Route 9 so that it will be more at grade up past Vecchitto's near the Green Street area. There have been no actual plans submitted, however; there was discussion regarding traffic directions.

Councilman Serra stated that these plans need to be brought forth to the Public Works & Facilities Commission before any decisions are made with the changing of traffic directions. He requested that the next set of plans be reviewed by the Public Works & Facilities Commission to discuss the impact of traffic on either side of Route 66.

- c. Butternut Park Playscape & Security Cameras – John Hollerbach, Creative Recreation, gave a brief overview on the Butternut Park proposed Playscape. The existing material will be demolished, recycled and replaced with new equipment. The proposed equipment is made by a U.S. based manufacturing company. Miracle Recreation invented the merry-go-round in 1927 and has been manufacturing play equipment ever since. The playground equipment has been specifically designed for children with

disabilities of all ages and different physical activity levels. Ground level accessible play components and elevated accessible play components will be added for a full sensory experience.

Two features that will enhance the park are the picnic shelters. There will be three or four handicap accessible tables under the picnic shelters. One will be on the side of the 5-12 play area for those interested in park rental opportunities and the other a little bit removed from the sensory garden for those that want to enjoy the pond and walking trails.

The materials used are made of heavy-gauged steel and powder coated finishes to make for very durable products. The equipment also has safety grips for any adults or children that many need extra support holding on to the equipment. John spoke about a large mega tower which is the age's 5-12 structure. There will be a handicap accessible route that connects from the large parking lot throughout the entire play space. This accessible route meets the federal requirements for accessibility.

The playground designated for ages 2-5 is the first playground on the left hand side. There are a couple of spring animals, a small play apparatus as well as some supportive therapeutic swings which all have the rubber pathway leading up to them. There is a sensory garden down the pathway to the right hand side where there are numerous musical instruments along with other stainless steel objects that can be played by using hands. There will also be a small musical hut which will include a chime panel, drums, a piano, a xylophone, etc. There will also be a natural climbing element which is a rock and ropes course similar to those seen in many parks.

The colors chosen, particularly the railings and the platforms are for the visually impaired. The rubber safety surface extends from the 2-5 playground, through the sensory garden and up to the 5-12 playground. Creative Recreation uses only a non-recycled vulcanized virgin rubber material which is new to the industry. This product is very durable, it does not break down and it does not contain any carcinogens. It meets all of the current Consumer Product Safety Commission guidelines as well as the American Society for Testing Materials. A combination of engineered wood fiber will be used as well to help lessen the cost of rubber. The wood fiber is also an accessible surface which meets the federal requirements for accessibility; however, it is not as easy as the rubber material to maneuver a wheelchair on.

Councilman Serra asked if there will be any security lighting or security cameras. Director Russo confirmed the lighting and cameras, however; it will be separate from this project and that there will be a separate proposal given after the presentation. He also asked if there were any possible injuries or weaknesses that have occurred while using this equipment. John stated that there have been no corrective action reports on any of the proposed equipment. The design for the Butternut Park Playscape has been reviewed by a third party and has been tested for all of its compliance to the International Playground Equipment Manufacturers Association. It is a certified and sealed drawing that complies to all of the current safety standards. All equipment is delivered with a maintenance kit with step by step guidelines on how to maintain the facility which can be done by City employees. The insurance policy will not increase, nor will it decrease since it already meets all of the safety guidelines.

Councilman Pessina asked a code-related question. He stated that in the past, playscapes had to be removed and/or replaced so that they can be brought up to code. He wanted to know if it is up to the City to make the necessary changes to the equipment when the codes change. John stated that the industry tends to change every 10-12 year cycles which is when the new Consumer Product

Safety Commission guidelines come out. The biggest industry change occurred between the mid 90's and the early 2000's. The entrapments had to be changed so that there weren't railing spaces between 3.5-9 inches. There has not been any other significant change within manufactures and their tooling. Therefore, going forward the manufacturer would not presume the responsibility of updating the equipment to meet any changes in the code.

Director Russo asked the Commission if they are comfortable to move forward with the playscape. The engineers in-house will look into the different opportunities for parking lot options on the Thomas Street side of the park.

Deputy Director Holden stated that a full survey on the playgrounds was conducted this year from bulging bolts to possible head entrapment areas. A couple of items were found that needed to be fixed. The new playground will undergo the same surveys to ensure the safety of the residents.

Christine Solimini-Swift, 1436 Millbrook Road, made a comment regarding the wood fibers or woodchips. She believes that 2-5 year olds along with children on the autism spectrum may choke on them. She also stated that elderly individuals may trip and fall on the woodchips considering the uneven surface. Christine stated that she is aware of the extra cost for volcanized rubber; however, she believes that there will be a lot less trips and falls if were installed all around rather than using both woodchips and rubber. John stated that the goal was to make the premises as user friendly as possible while keeping the budget in mind. Pathways made of the volcanized rubber were enlarged for easy traveling around the park. There is about 3,000 square feet of this rubber that will be installed at the park.

Councilman Serra asked what other products can be used in between the volcanized rubber. John stated that turf grass can be installed as the only other option in the playground industry.

Jamie Datino, 454 High Street, stated that she owns a daycare and has children of special needs enrolled in her program. Her concern, other than the woodchips and the need for mats at the end of the slides, is the location of the park which faces the road. She wants to know if there will be fencing to guard the blind spot coming down the hill nearby. Director Russo stated that a fence is in the proposed plans to be installed on the Butternut Street side. John confirmed that there is an option for the purchase of large rubber mats for placement at the bottom of each slide so that large holes will not form in the woodchips.

A member of the public asked if there was any way to install benches around the perimeter to keep a closer eye on children without hovering over them. Director Russo stated that there are woodchips at a number of schools and paths have been created for maneuvering from the car to the playground. The wood fibers do not allow elderly to move around easily since it's a loose fill material which allows for much movement.

Councilman Nocera recommended cutting down on some of the design and bring out more pathways near the entrances and exits off of the equipment for parents to meet up with their children.

A member of the public asked if there was any equipment for children under the age of 2-5. John confirmed that there will be no equipment for infants and toddlers to play on. There will be signs indicating the safety guidelines located at the entrance to each play area. There are no age or weight requirements for each apparatus so that individuals of all needs can be accommodated.

A member of the public asked if there are plans for flowers and plants to be planted near the sensory garden. John stated that the plants and landscaping would be an element that the community would need to take on. They also suggested that the signs shall also be written in Spanish due to the diversity in Middletown.

John stated that there is a \$43,864.00 state contract discount with an additional \$15,000.00 discount direct from the manufacturer which was part of the grant application process. This is a total of \$58,864.00 in savings.

Councilman Serra recommended that the Butternut Park Playscape remain on the agenda for any modifications since there is too much to approve of in one night.

Director Russo discussed the \$12,000.00 proposal for security cameras in Butternut Park.

He stated that there will be one camera that will roam the whole park and then there will be another camera that will be fixed only on the playscape area. Capability of seeing the footage on his computer and cell phone has recently been installed. Footage would be sent to dispatch as well. He strongly believes that if this much money is going to be invested in a park, that night cameras be installed. Any lighting would be an additional cost outside of the cameras.

Tina Gomes stated that only \$98,000.00 was budgeted for this project since there were some unexpected extras that were added. Since the project is going to cost more, she discussed ways to obtain money and transfer it from other line items. Millone & MacBroom's project at Pat Kidney Field and the Woodrow Wilson Track will allow for extra money to be used towards Butternut Park.

OLD BUSINESS:

- a. October 2016 Public Works Overtime Report – Director Russo stated that the Public Works overtime is at a minimum since there has been no snow. There are five crews out picking up leaves trying to beat the snow.
- b. October 2016 Building Permits – Director Russo stated that the Building Department has been busy and the City is very close to meeting the annual projected revenue.

OTHER:

- a. October 2016 Monthly Report – Highway Division – The Public Works & Facilities Commission reviewed their October 2016 monthly reports.
- b. October 2016 Overtime Report – Parks Division – At this time, there is no October 2016 overtime report for the Parks Division.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS:

As there was no further discussion, the Public Works & Facilities Commission meeting adjourned at 8:32 P.M.